

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-92, without prejudice to the filing of one or more additional divisional applications directed to the subject matter thereof, and add new claims 93-110, in accordance with the following complete listing of all claims ever presented. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the instant application:

Claims 1-92 (Canceled)

Claim 93 (New): A food additive composition comprising: (a) an edible solubilizing agent; (b) an effective amount of a suitable dispersant; (c) an effective amount of an antioxidant; and (d) an ester prepared by reacting at least one first reactant selected from the group consisting of sterols, stanols, and combinations thereof with at least one second reactant selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acids and carboxylic acid esters in the presence of a catalytically effective amount of a catalyst selected from the group consisting of calcium oxide, calcium hydroxide, a calcium salt of a carboxylic acid, magnesium hydroxide and combinations thereof.

Claim 94 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the at least one first reactant comprises β -sitosterol.

Claim 95 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the at least one first reactant comprises β -sitostanol.

Claim 96 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the catalyst comprises calcium hydroxide, calcium oxide or a calcium salt of a carboxylic acid.

Claim 97 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the at least one second reactant comprises a carboxylic acid having from about 2 to 22 carbon atoms.

Claim 98 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the catalyst comprises calcium oxide.

Claim 99 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the at least one second reactant comprises a mixture of long chain carboxylic acids derived from an oil selected from the group consisting of sunflower oil, palm kernel oil, coconut oil, rape seed oil, tallow, corn oil, canola oil, linseed oil, palm oil, olive oil, sesame oil, and safflower oil.

Claim 100 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the at least one second reactant comprises a carboxylic acid ester.

Claim 101 (New): The composition according to claim 100, wherein the at least one first reactant comprises β -sitosterol.

Claim 102 (New): The composition according to claim 100, wherein the at least one first reactant comprises β -sitostanol.

Claim 103 (New): The composition according to claim 100, wherein the catalyst comprises calcium hydroxide, calcium oxide or a calcium salt of a carboxylic acid.

Claim 104 (New): The composition according to claim 103, wherein the at least one second reactant comprises a carboxylic acid ester having from about 2 to 22 carbon atoms.

Claim 105 (New): The composition according to claim 103, wherein the at least one second reactant comprises a methyl ester of a C₆₋₂₂ fatty acid or a triglyceride.

Claim 106 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the edible solubilizing agent comprises a vegetable oil.

Claim 107 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the antioxidant comprises a tocopherol.

Claim 108 (New): The composition according to claim 93, wherein the dispersant comprises an alkyl polyglycoside.

Claim 109 (New): A food additive composition comprising: (a) an edible solubilizing agent; (b) an effective amount of a suitable dispersant; (c) an effective amount of an antioxidant; and (d) an ester prepared by reacting β -sitostanol with a carboxylic acid ester in the presence of an effective amount of calcium oxide.--

Claim 110 (New): A method of reducing the absorption of cholesterol into the bloodstream of a mammal, said method comprising: (i) providing a food additive composition comprising: (a) an edible solubilizing agent; (b) an effective amount of a suitable dispersant; (c) an effective amount of an antioxidant; and (d) an ester prepared by reacting at least one first reactant selected from the group consisting of sterols, stanols, and combinations thereof with at least one second reactant selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acids and carboxylic acid esters in the presence of a catalytically effective amount of a catalyst selected from the group consisting of calcium oxide, calcium hydroxide, a calcium salt of a carboxylic acid, magnesium hydroxide and combinations thereof; (ii) combining the food additive with a cholesterol-containing food; and (iii) administering the combined food and food additive to a mammal.